

Revision Notes

Class – 9 History

Chapter 5 – Pastoralists in the Modern World

Nomads are people who do not stay in one place for an extended period. Pastoralists, on the other hand, are those who own a lot of sheep, goats, or buffaloes. These animals feed on the area that is appropriate for them. This chapter is dedicated to these tribes who have been forgotten. We tend to believe that nomadic pastoralists were ancient people. These tribes, however, were highly active in the recent past and continue to live in the twenty-first century.

Pastoral Nomads in the Mountains

1. The Gujjar Bakarwal Tribe

- According to Anil Kumar and Naresh Kumar's research, the Gujjar Bakarwal tribe arrived in Jammu and Kashmir between 1127 and 1154 AD and spent the summer in the highlands of the state. The J&K mountains provided excellent grasses for their animals during the summer.
- As winter approached, the Gujjar Bakarwal were forced to relocate to the Shiwalik range's base.
- Their cattle were given pasture in the dry forests of the little Shiwalik highlands until April when they returned to the northern mountainous region of Jammu and Kashmir.
- They had set up several dwellings in the center of these two areas to make their journey easier. Kafila was the name given to these households.

2. The Gaddis

In Himachal Pradesh's mountainous regions, the Gaddi tribe was present. The majority of them were shepherds. They used to come down to the Shiwalik range's



lower elevations in the winter. They'd then get taller as April approached. They planned to spend their time in two villages: Lahaul and Spiti. They ascended higher up the slopes as the snow disappeared. They would then be taken down by September. They would halt at the two villages in the middle of their voyage to harvest the crops and seed the winter crops.

3. The Bhotiyas and Gujjars of Himachal Pradesh

The Bhotiyas and Gujjars, like other pastoralists, used to reside in the meadows of Himachal Pradesh's hilly regions (Buggyal) and climbed down to the dry forest area at the base of the Garhwal and Kumaon ranges (Bhabar).

According to Dharendra Datt Dangwal's research, the Bhotiyas were both pastoralists and traders, but the Gujjars were strictly pastoralists.

The Pastoral Nomads of the Plateaus and the Deserts

Why would there be nomads on the plateaus, is the first question that comes to mind. In the plateaus and deserts, there is no snowfall. Because livestock like sheep and goats cannot withstand high rains, pastoralists were forced to relocate during the rainy season. However, in the desert, they had to migrate to get food.

- During the monsoon, the Dhangars used to live in Maharashtra's central plateau. Because of the limited rainfall, they could only sow bajra. They'd finish harvesting their bajra in October and travel to Konkan. The Dhangars and the peasants had a mutual give-and-take relationship here. The fields needed to be fertilised after the Kharif crops were harvested. The Dhangars' livestock did this with their dung. They also ate the field's stubbles. The Konkans would send rice to the Dhangars.
- As soon as the monsoon was given, the Dhangars would leave Konkan. In Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, the situation was similar. With the arrival of the monsoon, the Gollas, Kurumas, and Kurubas were forced to relocate.
- The Banjaras of Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra had to migrate about a lot in order to find good pasture pastures for their cattle.



- The Rajasthani Raikas farmed their land during the monsoons and became pastoralists for the rest of the year.

Uniqueness of the Pastoralists:

Pastoral nomadism is a way of life that manifested other abilities as well:

- Pastoralists knew the regions they would travel like the backs of their hands, and they timed their journeys so well that they always arrived in the warmer regions just in time for harvest.
- They always maintained a friendly relationship with the farmers so that their animals could graze on their lands.
- They also provided manure to the farms. They practised various activities such as trading, cultivation, and herding, therefore it was a win-win situation.

In other words, their constant migration had a tremendous economic and environmental impact. These pastoralists were more than just nomadic. They were well-versed in the areas where their cyclical voyages took place. These pastoralists had to plan their voyage so that they could avoid winter and mountains while still taking advantage of the better weather during the harvest season. They were also pretty gregarious at the same time. They needed to keep a good connection with the farmers so that their animals could graze on their land. Farmers required manure from these animals as well.

The Plight of the Pastoralists under the British Raj:

- Any uncultivated regions were considered wastelands by the colonial authorities. They aimed to transform all vacant land into cultivated land to boost revenue and increase jute, cotton, and other agricultural products for the people of England.
- As a result, they acquired control of these territories and put their troops to oversee agriculture.
- Most of the forests were made off-limits to pastoralists when the Forest Act was passed, and the colonial authorities saw these nomadic tribes as criminals. Why? They didn't settle because they didn't want to. The government can



easily control and rule a group of people who live in a specific place, but people who are always on the move are difficult to control.

- As a result, the nomads had to seek permission from the government to leave their communities.
- Then there were the taxes. Pastoralists were required to pay taxes on each animal they owned. They couldn't enter the grazing tracts unless they paid taxes.
- As grazing pastures grew scarce, pastoralists were forced to re-graze their animals on previously used lands. The misuse of meadows has now destroyed the soil's fertility. As a result, the grazing lands have shrunk even more.

The Outcome:

- Pastoralists were unable to access the pastures that they had previously enjoyed due to colonial government actions and political restructuring after 1947.
- As a result, they were compelled to reduce the number of animals they owned. Many animals died as a result of the shortage of food, and many pastoralists were forced to relocate in search of pastures that had not yet been taken by the drought.
- The Raikas were unable to visit Sindh when it was annexed by Pakistan in 1947. As a result, they've moved to Haryana, where their sheep may graze on the farmers' land.
- After independence, the wealthier pastoralists settled down, while the poorest ones lost their cattle and became labourers.
- Pastoralists, on the other hand, have not been extinct in the modern world. They responded to the changing conditions of the contemporary world by, among other things, lowering the quantity of their livestock and shifting the direction of their migrations.

The Maasais of Africa:

- Prior to the arrival of Europeans in Africa, the Maasais had access to a broad swath of country stretching from northern Kenya to Tanzania.



- The land was partitioned between the two countries when Britain and Germany claimed Maasailand. The Maasais had been forced into a corner. For their animal, grazing land.
- Another factor contributing to the reduction of grazing land was the European urge to cultivate more and more land.
- Game reserves such as Kenya's Maasai Mara and Tanzania's Serengeti have further encroached on grazing pastures.
- The Maasai tribe's cattle suffered greatly as a result of these occurrences, which significantly reduced grazing land.
- Furthermore, the Maasai tribes' movement was constrained by the Europeans. As a result, they were unable to trade. They couldn't even feed their livestock since they couldn't get enough fodder.
- Droughts, along with the actions of colonial governments, caused half of the cattle in the Maasai reserve to perish.

Important Questions and Answers

1. Why did the nomadic tribes move from one place to another?

Ans: The pastoralists were the nomadic tribes. For their cattle, they required grazing land. So, when the mountains were covered in snow in the winter, they had to descend in search of milder locations where the cattle could graze on plants and greenery. They would return to the highlands once the winter had passed. Another tribe had to avoid a damp, rainy climate that was harmful to their survival. As a result, they would relocate during the monsoon. Then in order to find decent pastoral pastures, I went back to the deserts. The nomads had to travel from one location to the next.

2. Why was the nomadic activity of the pastoralists beneficial to the environment?

Ans: The nomad pastoralists' lands could be used twice or three times. They became unsuited for cultivation after that. The nomads would depart that location and seek pasture in other areas. In the meantime, the forest would reclaim the territory that

the nomads had abandoned. The land would become more fertile. As a result, the land was not overused. Furthermore, the excrement from the nomads' animals contributed to the fertilization of the land.

3. How did the Waste Land Rules change the lives of the pastoralists?

Ans: Any land that was not being cultivated was designated a wasteland under the Waste Land laws. To enhance revenue and output, the colonial administration took over the fields and began farming them. As a result, there was a decline in pastoral land. Pastoralists couldn't locate enough acreage to feed their herds. They had to keep repurposing the same area as pastures. This further reduced the amount of pastoral area available, resulting in a serious lack of animal grazing land.

4. How did the Forest Act change the lives of the pastoralists?

Ans: The Indian woods were only exploited to generate trees that could provide timbres, according to the Forest Act. It was thought that the grazing animals would degrade the forest's quality. Small saplings and shrubs would be chewed by the animals. As a result, pastoralists were prohibited from entering these woodlands. This resulted in a scarcity of grazing ground, particularly during the winter when the mountains were blanketed in snow.

5. How can we improve the lives of the nomadic tribes today?

Ans: Many nomadic tribes, unlike the Adivasis, are not classified as scheduled tribes. As a result, they are unable to benefit from the government's assistance to the scheduled tribes. These indigenous nomadic tribes must be brought under the jurisdiction of ST. Local authorities believe the huts of the nomadic clan of Gujjar Barkarwals to be illegal. These persons must be treated with care by the authorities. Above all, we must keep in mind that not all land is suitable for urbanization. Some things should be left to the ancient tribes and nature.